

HIV /AIDS AND ITS SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT ON INDIAN WOMEN [Special reference to Female sex workers, female factory workers and Girl Students] – TODAY’S SCENARIO

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Indian Women

Indian women are known for their good old cultural values, average literacy level, bond with family ties and also vulnerable for sexual infections like STI/HIV/AIDS. As per the available data's its show that the prevalence of HIV among the women is showing decreasing trends and the awareness level is increasing the impact of the HIV/AIDS on Indian women can be analyzed on Sociological, Economical and Psychological aspects.

The BSS [Behavioral Surveillance Survey -2006] of APAC [AIDS Prevention and Control Programme], Chennai gives the recent trends in the HIV/AIDS knowledge, awareness and behaviour of Women and girl students of Tamil Nadu state which will throw light to the impact on this issue.

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S.No	Category	Impact Indicators	Year and Percentage
1	Female Sex workers	Knowledge level on HIV/AIDS	98.5 – 2006
1 a	Female Sex workers	Knowledge without misconceptions	45.5 -2006
1 b	Female Sex workers	Condom usage with their clients	91.8 -2006
1 C	Female Sex workers	Health seeking behaviour	75.6 - 2006
2	Female factory workers	Knowledge level on HIV/AIDS	60.6- 2006
2 a	Female factory workers	Health seeking behaviour	91.7 - 2006
3	Female Students average age [18]	Knowledge level on HIV/AIDS	98.6 – 2006
3 a	Female Students average age [18]	Involvement on sex with Non-regular partner	Has increased from 0.3 % to 1.8 % in last two years
3 b	Female Students average age [18]	Condom usage	Has declined from 35.2 % to 21.6 %
3 C	Female Students average age [18]	Perception Risk	63.6 in 2003 to 19.5 % in 2006
3 d	Female Students average age [18]	Knowledge on STI	Increased from 67.6 in 2003 to 69.5 in 2006

Sociological Impact

The average age of the HIV/AIDS affected in India are 18 - 45 and the average age of Women affected by HIV/AIDS are also the same. This age is the productivity age and the infection caused during this period may bring dramatic effect on the Indian womanhood.

The social stigma beyond our imagination is associated with this disease; women affected by HIV/AIDS are often seen as shameful, unwanted, abandoned and neglected by the family and society. Infected women are being punished and

hard-pressed into beyond belief state of affairs. In some societies HIV/AIDS is seen as on the result of personal irresponsibility. The impact of HIV/AIDS on women is particularly acute. In our societies women are often economically, culturally, as well as socially disadvantaged and lack of equal access to treatment, financial support and education. Even women are mistakenly perceived as the main transmitters of the sexually transmitted Diseases

From the above data's we can come to conclusion that the HIV/AIDS and Female sex workers are very much co-related, due to the continuous intervention programmes by the NGO's the Knowledge level on HIV AIDS among Female sex workers had increased to 98.5 % but the knowledge level without misconception is only 45.5 which shows that still fifty percentage of the Female Sex workers are not aware of Prevention techniques of HIV/AIDS.

The impact can be assessed that still the female sex workers are prone to STI/HIV/AIDS infections and they transmit to their male clients and they to their partners [House wives].

At the same time it is appreciable that the female sex workers are using condoms [91.8%] and their health seeking behaviour [going to the trained /specialized doctor] has increased to 75.6 %.

So there is a need of targeted intervention, systematically planned towards orienting the female sex workers on their role in transmitting the infections to their partners. The reason for the gap is 1. The lack of risk perception 2. non-usage of condom with regular partners 3. police and rowdies problems 4. lack of health conscious 5. Non-co-operation with NGO workers.

Regarding the Female factory workers today the knowledge level on HIV/AIDS has increased to 60.6 and the health seeking behaviour has also dramatically increased to 91.7 % in the past two years. This shows the effective intervention programmes targeted towards this category by the NGO's and CBO's.

This impact has given positive signs that, the women work force are getting due awareness programmes on HIV/AIDS issues and the productivity of this category will be increasing in coming days. But still the knowledge without misconception, usage of condom are still lacking among this category which brings new infections among this group.

The most important and alarming scenario is the HIV/AIDS impact on the female students category the data reveals that the involvement on sex with Non - regular partner among the girl students has increased from 0.3% to 1.8% in last two years. At the same time the condom usage among the girl students also declined from 35.2% to 21.6 %.

The reason beyond is the decline in the risk perception among the girl students, the data supports the issue by a sharp decline from 63.6 % in 2003 to 19.5% in 2006. This is the simple reason which has made a attitude change among the girl students in their behaviour in sexual relationships. There is also a marginal increase in the knowledge on STI from 67.6 % in 2003 to 69.5 in 2006.

Conclusion

No doubt that the intervention programmes targeted towards women are working effectively in our state but still we have reached only to the half mark level and still the ice berg is lying inside the ocean.

The measures need today to tackle the issue is :-

1. More target oriented programmes for Women and Girl students
2. Involvement of Government, Industry, Academic Institutions
3. Health education from school level
4. Usage of Mass media more sensibly
5. Counselling facilities in School and colleges
6. Peer group formation and relevant training